



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Huntington District

Castle Comments

Vol. 48, No. 1

January 2003

Tackling a big job in very little time



The Oak Ridge facility in Tennessee is being closed with the help of the Corps.

By **CHUCK MINSKER**
Public Affairs

Employees of the Corps occasionally find themselves facing big projects or short deadlines, but a recent job for the Department of Energy (DOE) was a challenge in both categories.

In 1995 the DOE started the job of closing and decontaminating the nuclear facilities at Oak Ridge, with a final cost estimated at more than two billion dollars. The project, which covers a 35,000 acre area, is expected to wrap up in 2008.

It's a mammoth effort that will, over the years, involve a number of Federal agencies and professionals.

The most recent challenge fell to a team from the Huntington. As Program Manager Mark Kessinger said, "Because the Corps has developed an excellent reputation in cost estimating, the DOE called on us to review and evaluate the Oak Ridge Program."

The call came to Huntington's Kessinger because he had been the Corps' liaison in

DOE headquarters for 10 months in 1997. Also, Kessinger project managed a team that launched a nuclear reactor decommissioning project for NASA in Plumbrooke, Ohio and a DOE radioactive restoration in Ashtubula, Ohio.

The DOE wanted a validation and examination of work estimates prepared by a contractor, but the Corps team had to manage the job quickly – they started in September of this year, and delivered the final report before Thanksgiving. And the project featured a big budget, totaling almost half a million dollars.

"It covered everything from environmental remediation to decontamination to surveillance and maintenance," Kessinger added, "including decommissioning of some of Oak Ridge's nuclear facilities."

The job included on-site inspections and a lot of number crunching.

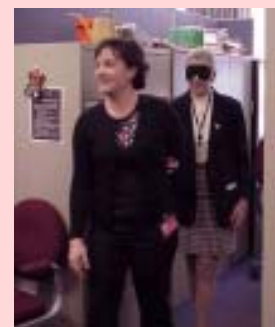
The Huntington District didn't tackle the job alone. As part of the Regional Business Center model, Kessinger said,
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Smiles out to:



Jonathan Jackson for participating in Beverly Hills Middle School Career Fair Nov. 22, 2002.



John Clarkson for participating in student shadowing Nov. 25, 2002.



Terry Noble for participating in student shadowing Dec. 23, 2002 and Jan. 21.

Commander's Corner



New year, new challenges and possibility of war

By COL JOHN RIVENBURGH
District Engineer

Happy New Year to all. I trust and hope you all had a joyous holiday and that everyone is now refreshed and ready to tackle the challenges of 2003. This New Year will bring many challenges to both our district and our great Nation. We'll face them head on and as we usually do; we'll persevere.

The budget delay will require us to start work on some projects later than we normally would. This is especially true in the area of Congressional adds. I know you'll do your very best to meet our customer's needs, but I'll also be prepared to tell the truth if we can't finish work this fiscal year. Plan your work so you'll be prepared when the budget arrives.

Competitive Sourcing and its challenges are starting to work through the system. You all know all I do at this point. One key element to all competitions is accurately describing our work. Each of you need to keep track of what your job entails. The things you do on a less frequent basis are the items that could make the difference between a contractor winning or losing the competition. Ten-year project inspections, passing ice and debris through locks and forest fires are three examples that come to mind.

War with Iraq looms on the horizon and folks from our district are either deployed or are on alert for deployment. Husbands and wives, sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of Huntington District employees are in the same category as well. John Cidila from Customer Service is in Kuwait and Norm Spero, our Chief



Counsel, has been to Germany to assist soldiers preparing to deploy. Think about them and their families as you go about your daily business and keep them in your prayers – their families need them more than you'll ever know. Remember - because of them, we are able to enjoy the freedoms we have here at home. God Bless them and each and every one of you.

Civil works program does not directly support man in foxhole, but supports the nation

By STEVE WRIGHT
Public Affairs

“To be or not to be, that is the question.” One thing about Shakespeare is his timeless prose. This sentence applies to the civil works program in the US Army Corps of Engineers in the current privatization job review.

Army wide there are 210,000 “non-core” jobs being evaluated. The Corps is being asked to review as many as 32,600 jobs, 99 percent of which are civilian. Considering the Corps civilian workforce is 38,000, almost every civilian job will be reviewed for privatization. Department of Army non core jobs can be defined as not directly supporting the Army’s current combat mission.

Why such an aggressive approach in the Corps of Engineers? The answer lies in the Army’s definition of core jobs—as directly supporting the combat mission. Our civil works mission does not directly support the soldier in the foxhole.

Instead we have responsibilities such as protecting Americans from flooding, providing for low-cost transportation of bulk materials on the inland waterway, protecting the environment, water supply, providing recreation, responding to disaster emergencies, overseeing the regulatory program and providing engineering services to a nation.

The Army Civil Works Mission is intertwined in the history of the nation. When Congress established the first engineering school at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point

under the supervision and direction of the Army Corps of Engineers, it was not only to help fight our nation’s wars, but also to develop our nation’s infrastructure. This work has been done by the Army Corps of Engineers and is part of our historic legacy.

Our founding fathers acknowledged the problems of a small number of states lining the Atlantic Ocean with vast holdings of land on the North American continent. They correctly determined that infrastructure development was critical to the new nation. As a result, Army officer engineer graduates of the West Point Military Academy were given responsibilities to help bring the nation together through developing road and river transportation through two important Congressional Acts in 1824.

The General Survey Act on April 30, 1824 authorized the President to use Army engineers to survey road and canal routes of national importance. On May 24, Congress appropriated \$75,000

to improve navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi River and stipulated that the President might use any engineers in public service to accomplish this task. A job was quickly turned over to the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps was also directed to repair and complete the National Road also known as the Cumberland Road that had been constructed by the Treasury Department between Cumberland, Md. on the Potomac River and Wheeling, Va. (W.Va.) on the Ohio River. Beginning in 1825 the existing eastern segment of the road was repaired by the Corps of Engineers using a McAdam surface process of placing three layers of broken stone with each layer three-inches thick. The Corps extended the National Road from Wheeling to Vandalia, Ill. by 1841. Today, the original road is US 40 and reaches from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

In the tradition of Lewis and Clark, the Corps of Engineers explored and mapped the western United States (1840-1880). Other Corps civil works milestones included placing the dome on the capitol building (1863) recommending necessary protection, and making improvements in Yellowstone Park (1883), completing the Washington Monument (1884), completing the Panama Canal (1914), becoming the nation’s primary flood control agency (1936), completing the Alaska—Canadian Highway (1942), begin construction of Veteran’s Hospital (1946), completing work on St. Lawrence Seaway (1958), starting construction of NASA space centers in Houston and Cape Kennedy (1961), assuming enforcement responsibilities for sections of the Clean Water Act (1972), supporting EPA Superfund site restoration (1984), restoring Kuwait’s infrastructure (1991), responding to 9/11 (2001) and beginning to restore the Everglades (2002).

This is a long historical list of civil works accomplishments, but a list putting into perspective how the Army Corps of Engineers answered the nation’s call whenever and however we were needed.

“To be or not to be,” let this decision for the Corps civil works program be made by a person with a knowledge and sense of history.



The Capital Dome



The Washington Monument

Employees experience a mock impairment

Disability simulation reveals challenges

By PEGGY NOEL
Public Affairs

What would you do if your sight was suddenly taken from you, and you were left in a world of darkness? What if you were in a serious accident and left confined to a wheelchair? Or what would you do if you suffered permanent hearing loss, lost your fine motor skills or, as the result of a stroke, lost your ability to speak?

About a dozen district team members were given the opportunity to experience life as a person with a disability while participating in a mock disability exercise in observance of National Disability Awareness Month. Representatives from Mountain State Centers for Independent Living presented information on living with disabilities. Afterwards, district team members were given equipment which allowed them to experience the work world as a disabled person.

Resource Management employee Greg Lovins found himself confined to a wheelchair as part of the exercise. Even though the federal building is considered to be handicap accessible, Lovins found maneuvering the wheelchair a frustration and inconvenience. "Entering some of the offices throughout the building was an obstacle," Lovins said. "I found it frustrating that I could not fit the wheelchair inside of the cubicle where

I work. I could manage the chair through the office, but not inside each cubicle."

Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist, Tracy Baker, also participated in the exercise and found the experience to be very enlightening. She was equipped with a face mask which simulated the condition Retinitis Pigmentosa. This condition begins with loss of night vision and leads to gradually decreasing peripheral vision.

"The experience helped me to recognize those things I take for granted when dealing with others who have disabilities. I learned, for example, that when someone with a visual impairment enters an elevator, I should recognize them and identify myself rather than standing quietly in the corner."

Other district employees who participated in the mock disability exercise included Ginny Lares, Kathy Patrick, Norm Spero, Randy McKenzie, Jim Schray, Annie Williams, Andrew McDavid and Ron Keeling.

I was also one of the volunteers for the mock disability exercise. To simulate my disability, a blindfold was placed over my eyes. I was suddenly thrust into a world of darkness. For two hours, I experienced what it was like to be without sight.

It was a frightening experience. Fortunately, I was accompanied by



Photo by Chuck Minsker

Alissa Stewart of Mountain State Centers for Independent Living leads volunteer Peggy Noel around during her exercise.

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living employee Alissa Stewart, who served as my guide and lifeline. I learned that I had to completely and unequivocally trust this person whom I had just met.

From that point on, my life was literally in her hands. I had to depend on her to help me from the staff conference room to my office, which is only about 14 feet. The building that I've worked in for over 28 years was suddenly very foreign. I couldn't remember whether the door to the Public Affairs office opened outward towards the hallway or inward towards the office. Things I had taken for granted were no longer available to me. While answering the telephone, I became frustrated because I couldn't find the button to transfer a call.

With the help of Stewart though, I was soon walking down the hallways, using the stairwell and even walking outdoors. Did you know there are nine stairs between landings? Stewart showed me how to be led, and how to read her movements. If she put her arm behind her back, I knew that I had to stay close behind her because the space was getting smaller. She showed me that changing her arms indicated to the visually impaired



Photo by Peggy Noel

Annie Williams, Jim Schray and Andrew McDavid discuss the mock disability exercise. The simulation was hosted by the Federal Women's Program in recognition of National Disability Awareness Month.

person which way the door opened. Good communication between us was critical.

But what I found to be most interesting during the two hours that I was visually impaired was that no one, other than my Public Affairs coworkers, spoke to me if they saw me in the hallway, canteen or elevator. People spoke to Stewart, but not to me. Even though I knew other people were in the canteen, no one acknowledged me, even though I tried to engage them in conversation. It was as though if I couldn't see them, then I couldn't hear or speak either. Stewart was not surprised by this observation. "Many times, people are uncomfortable around a disabled person, and rather than speaking to the person, they simply act as though the person is not there."

According to Stewart, more than 55 million Americans are disabled, and those numbers are growing every day. "As people, we are born Caucasian, Black, Asian or Hispanic, and we will always be so. But that's not so with a disabled person. Anyone, at anytime can become a person with a disability." What determines whether a person is disabled? If a person meets any of the following criteria, they can be considered as a person with a disability.

A person is considered disabled if they have a physical or mental condition that impairs one or more major life activities.

If a person has a record of such impairment, they are considered disabled.

If a person is regarded by others as having such impairment, they are considered disabled.

For many years, disabled persons were considered unskilled or uneducated and unable to successfully blend into the workplace. Employers used the excuse that it was too expensive to accommodate the needs of the disabled person.

This is simply not true. "Most workers who are disabled require no special accommodations at all," says Jeanie Meadows, Community Resource Advocate, Centers for Independent Living. "Most simply want to be accepted for who they are and what they can do, not for their limitations."

Students of the Month



Name: Laurie Webb
School: Marshall University
Year: Junior
Field: Nursing/Business Management
Hometown: Milton, W.Va.
Started with Corps: July 1999
Office: OR-T

Name: Patrina Adkins
School: Marshall University
Year: Senior
Field: Education
Hometown: Wayne, W.Va.
Started with Corps: December 1998
Office: OR-T

Nomination: "I am really proud of these two. As you know, a good student is hard to find, and somehow we ended up with two. They are used so often by the front office, the Commander knows them by name and seldom misses a morning of greeting them. Laurie is in the National Guard and you could say embodies 'Support to the nation.' She was also used to assist a disaster field office at Beckley last year. Patrina can do anything the Administrative Assistant can do including complex travel orders, troubleshoot CEFMS, etc. We are really dependent on them, and would like to see them recognized." Arlie Bishop, Chief Technical Support Branch, Operations and Readiness.

Why not nominate your outstanding student

By **ELIZABETH SLAGEL**
Public Affairs

As I read and edited the student nomination above, I recalled the times I've dealt with both Laurie and Patrina and had to agree.

The truth is there are a lot of exceptional students working both in the field and district office. Many of them assume tasks that are well beyond copying and filing reports.

Some of the more experienced

students even take on some of the more professional tasks.

Whether they just save you time, by walking you through those seemingly complicated computer questions or answer the phone with an air of personable enthusiasm, they add something to your office and work environment that might not be found in anyone but a student.

So if you want to give your student a pat on the back, submit their name and a short explanation to Elizabeth Slagel.

Greenup plan puts weight behind Co

Ambitious lock expansion mitigation plan includes new id

By ELIZABETH SLAGEL
Public Affairs

At first glance the mitigation plan for the Greenup lock extension can easily be mistaken for an entire environmental restoration project.

"The beauty of it is, it's not," Pete Dodgion ecologist for Planning Branch said. "It's very much a navigation project; yet it has a lot of the environmental benefits of an ecosystem project. It's just the Corps' way of doing business differently."

This new way of business is part of a more environmentally conscientious Corps willing to go the extra mile in restoring disturbed environments from its water resource projects. In fact, the river habitat near Greenup could actually be better after the project is complete than it was before the lock expansion, according to the proposed plan.

However, the Corps isn't changing its focus entirely. It is simply using a wider lens when considering how to best expand an overused lock on the Ohio River while restoring some of the lost habitat sacrificed years ago for the nation's comprehensive lock and dam system.

In doing so, the Huntington District is looking at using \$3.8 of its

projected \$211 million total project costs to mitigate lost habitat caused by extending the 600 foot auxiliary chamber to a second 1200 foot chamber.

By using a cheaper method of constructing the extension, using lift/in float/in technology, the Corps indirectly discovered it was saving on environmental impacts in a big way. Floating in the concrete walls and setting them into place eliminates the need to reroute the river with cofferdams as traditionally done when building or extending lock walls. This alone will save two miles of shoreline and hundreds of acres of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, Dodgion said.

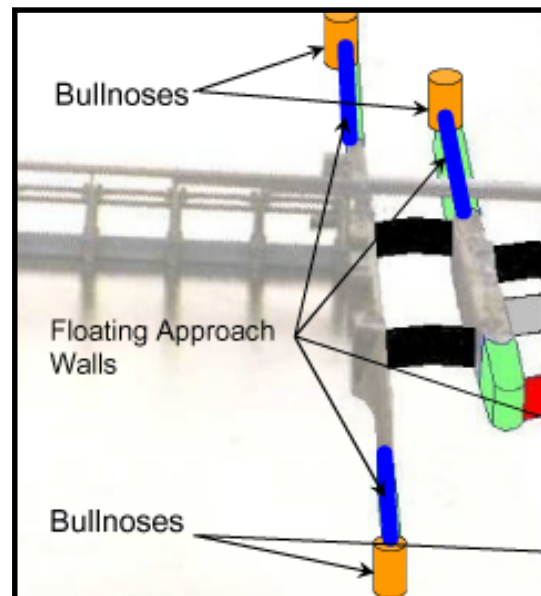
Beyond using a more environmentally conducive method, Dodgion and his Corps team along with state resource agencies continue to test and discuss various ways to further carry the project through with minimal impact to the environment.

One such idea is to recycle rock dug from the riverbottom that will be tested for the proposed state-of-the-art float in wall method. Rather than just disposing of this material, Dodgion said the Corps is looking at putting it back into the river to help build a new mussel habitat adjacent to an existing mussel bed.

In fact, the mitigation team is looking for tangible uses for all typically disposed material. Another example is portions of the existing lock wall that will be knocked down will likely be used to build underwater t-dikes which will be winter habitat structures for fish. "T-dikes are out in deep water and their objective is to create scour features where fish will congregate during the winter. Fish are vulnerable and need quiet water areas during this time," Dodgion said.

Sounds like an impossible mission considering the area is a busy waterway transit and sees some 25 barges lock through a day.

However, that fact isn't stopping the Corps from trying to artificially create as much of a traditional riffle



type environment as possible—even though it is nearly nonexistent in today's Ohio River.

This type of environment is oxygenated, rocky, turbulent and unchannelized and commonplace for most natural undisturbed rivers. The only place one would be possible on the Ohio is 1,000 feet below a dam. It has the conditions including a no traffic zone, but lacks the part rocky/part sediment bottom.

Of course that is where the Corps' mitigation plan takes shape. To create a riffle-type environment, the Corps is proposing two 1,000-foot parallel dikes in the tailwater zone below Greenup that would mimic an ideal stream habitat and offer opportunities to many threatened Ohio River species. "State resource agencies in Ohio and West Virginia have sought such structures at the Ohio River locks and dams for years in recognition of its ability to change the character of the river for certain species of fish and aquatic insects," Dodgion said.

This idea never even made it to the drawing board before because of many misconceptions about its effects on the main function of the project—navigation. "I really have to give David Conley (Greenup expansion

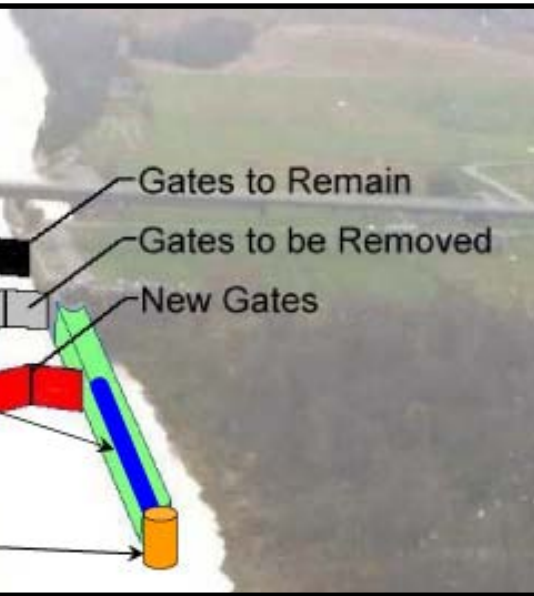


Photo by Charlie Johnson

Barges on both side of the dam wait it out as the main chamber is closed for maintenance. Three are seen on the Kentucky side of the river upstream of Greenup.

Corps' new environmental soundness

deals with some uncharted old ones



lead engineer) credit here. He is as flexible an engineer as I've seen," Dodgion said.

Consequently, the riffle type environment did better than make it to the drawing board. It was physically modeled at the Waterways Experiment Station and proven a success. Now, it is in the plans and a first for the Huntington District.

Also thinking outside the box is Greenup Lockmaster Eric Dolly who helped devise a mitigation plan for offshore disturbance to surrounding project open fields. Knowing all too well the operations and maintenance costs of continually mowing 24 acres of what he calls bad hay fields, Dolly decided to experiment with warm season grasses.

About two years ago, he teamed up with a Kentucky wildlife biologist to determine what grasses would be both attractive and beneficial to plant. The biologist determined since 85 percent of Kentucky used to be prairie, warm season grasses like switch grass, Indian grass and blue stem would be ideal. To add a little color and attractiveness, Dolly added 95 pounds of perennial wildflowers as well.

This past spring, the once bad hay fields were a spectacular sight as well as attractors to prairie-type animals

"It's one of the best concepts the Corps has ever approved and we're excited about it. I hope this one goes through-- it has tremendous potential."

Scott Schell, Aquatic Biologist
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

and a successful experiment as to what to plant in future disturbed areas. "I think it is a good thing and you can have fun with it," Dolly said.

He added his first focus is getting his busy lock compliant with its navigation demand while his interest in the environment tends to be secondary. But when he's asked to look at innovative ways to keep the cost minimal to the environment he is willing to donate the time as he did in seeding the grasses and wildflowers.

As for the rest of the mitigation plan, mooring cells were included for barges waiting their turn to lock through—a much needed feature during construction hang ups. However, a lot of care is being used in deciding what type of mooring cells to use. Team members are looking closely at trying to detract barges from a popular gravel bar downstream of the dam that is thought to be a developing mussel bed.

"Barges just run up on the bank there because it is an opportune place to park while waiting to lock through," Dolly said.

State and other resource agencies worry about what this practice does to a developing bed that holds some real potential.

Construction of the lock extension will also take out many hardwoods along the bank, posing another environmental problem—bank stabilization. Dodgion said the team is trying to come up with rip rap

alternatives of trees, shrubs and rocks. Also along the shore, the plan calls for 1.3 acres of protected shallows to be constructed of woody bundles that protect fish from wave action. The shallows would provide homes to juvenile fish.

Scott Schell, aquatic biologist with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, said this mitigation plan is a tremendous leap forward for the Corps. He and many of his colleagues from other state resource agencies worked closely with the Corps team to push aspects of the mitigation plan through.

Schell particularly praises the riffle type environment proposal below the dam. "Quite frankly, I think it is one of the most beneficial things we can be doing with the biggest bang for our buck." He added it just makes sense to replace a lost habitat that a lot of fish like walleye, sauger and sturgeon need to thrive.

Walleye and sauger were formerly much more abundant and are now forced to spawn on the borders of the river. The manmade riffles would enhance tailwater habitat where the majority of fishermen harvest their fish, adding an economy boom to the proposal.

"It's one of the best concepts the Corps has ever approved and we're excited about it. I hope this one goes through--it has tremendous potential."

Mitigation work is scheduled to begin in 2005.

Corps plans to build Kimball new town hall/fire station after repeated flooding

By KATHY REA
Public Affairs

Like many southern West Virginia towns, Kimball has been the victim of several devastating floods, leaving its citizens wondering about the future of their town.

Jack Premo has been Kimball's mayor for 23 years and has lived there all his life. Although he wasn't mayor during the 1977 flood of record, he remembers it well. During the '77 flood, the Kimball Town Hall/Fire Station had several feet of water in it. The building, constructed in the early 1900s, housed the town hall, police department and jail. After the 1977 flood, the town cleaned up and went back to business as usual.

In July 2001, the town hall was severely flooded again. Kimball Fire Chief Jimmy Gianato estimates this flood caused \$40,000 in damage to the building. "The water rose so quickly, we barely had time to get the trucks out," Gianato said.

By the end of that July day, five feet of water had rushed into the building. Town records were washed away or entangled in debris. So much mud and debris had washed into the building that the door could not be opened.

"I live on the hill and didn't know what was happening," said Premo. "Everything was going down the creek. People were taking pictures of the water and things washing downstream."

Not only did the flood waters bring in mud this time but also a mixture of chemicals that had been stored in people's basements. It was feared that these chemicals reacted with the protective barriers on the firemen's turnout gear (coats, helmets, boots) so as a precaution, everything was replaced.

Once again the town cleaned up. Then in May 2002, less than a year later, the unthinkable happened again. The town was hit by another

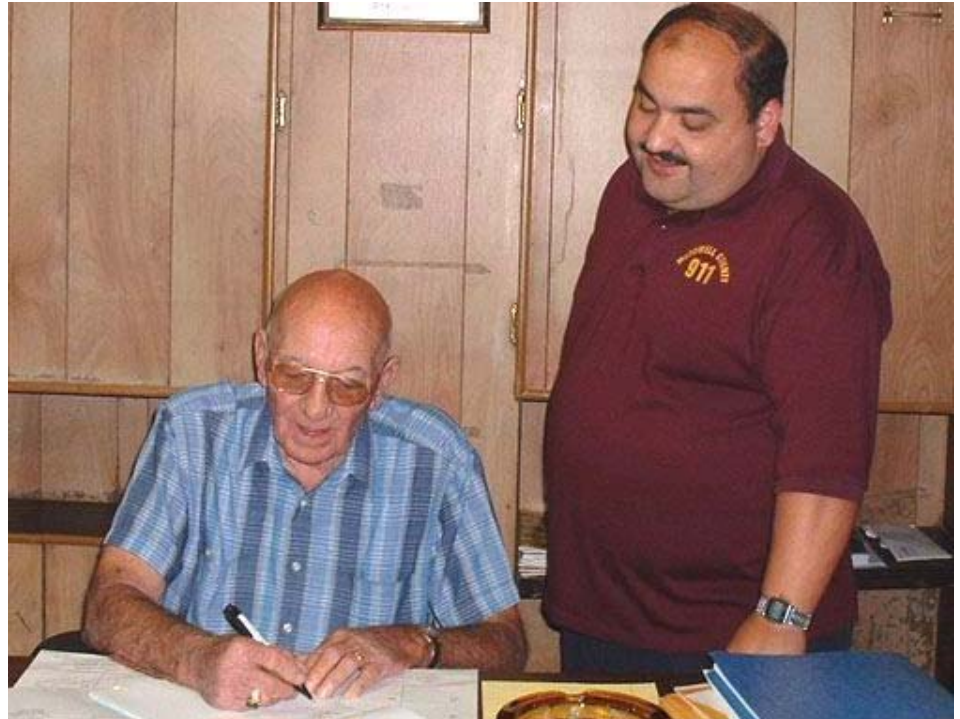


Photo by Dwight Smith

Mayor Jack Premo signs Relocation Agreement for the Town Hall/Fire Station as Fire Chief Jimmy Gianato watches.

flood. Again five feet of water engulfed the Town Hall/Fire Station. Town records were again washed away and the new computer was gone. The building was filled with more mud and debris than left by the previous flood.

Town representatives met with the Corps of Engineers to find answers to prevent their Town Hall/Fire Station from being destroyed by another flood. Many citizens would like to see the existing structure floodproofed. However, it is in the Elkhorn Creek floodway and must be removed. The Corps plans to build a new structure, outside the floodway across Route 52 from the existing one.

"We need it (the building)," said Premo. "We got to get out of here before these floods happen again."

Construction of a new building is possible through Section 202 of the Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act of 1981 and Section 105 of Public Law 96-367. This legislation provides the authority for construction of flood control measures

in the Tug Fork Basin to prevent future losses occurring from a flood equal to the flood of April 1977 or a 100-year frequency event, whichever is greater.

Some citizens say there is no one left to protect. But Gianato disagrees, saying the fire and police departments cover an area from the Welch city limits to Keystone, which includes Mount View High School and Belcher Mountain.

Currently the town of Kimball has contracted to design and build a floodsafe 3,000 square foot replacement Town Hall/Fire Station on Route 52. The new building will be designed to fit the needs and function of the town. A relocations contract was signed August 14, 2002, between the Corps and the town of Kimball to proceed with the design and construction of a new facility. The Corps is now in the process of buying property for the replacement building that is scheduled to begin construction in early 2004 and be completed that same year.

Retirees Corner

The COEHDRA news corner

By **JOHN TURNER**
COEHDRA Publications
Coordinator

COEHDRA Happenings:

Well by now Christmas 2002 is old news and no doubt if you're like me, you've made your visits back to the stores for size and/or duplication changes, or just plain dissatisfaction of some of the gifts you received. Sometimes I catch myself wondering if it's all worth the effort...but then realize that tradition must prevail and reluctantly find myself each year back in line with the crowd. Could this feeling be a part of the "Senior Moments" I hear so much about....Bah Humbug! Anyway, we've made it through another year and our COEHDRA (Corps of Engineers Huntington District Retiree Association) considers it to be a "banner" one and is looking forward with much excitement in making 2003 activities more interesting and appealing for all retirees. Our next Planning Meeting will be Monday, Jan. 27 in the Federal Building 6th Floor Conference Room. All retirees are invited and encouraged to attend our meetings. Happy New Year!

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON:

Speaking of activities, this year's first ever Christmas Luncheon was Dec. 2, 2002 at the East End Ponderosa Restaurant and was nothing less than an outstanding success. There were 43 in attendance with several "new faces" and in addition to an array of excellent food, great fellowship and fun was had by all and over half walked away as door prize gift winners. Bevo wants to again express his appreciation to all who helped

put this event together and especially a big "thank you" to those of you who attended. The picture found in this Castle Issue was provided by our Web Page Coordinator Randy Sortet.

SHONEY'S BREAKFAST: Just a reminder that several retirees meet informally for breakfast at the West End Shoney's Restaurant on the first Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. If you are retired you are in the "club" and welcome to attend.

CONDOLENCES: I learned recently that one of our former Corps employees, Glen Hamrick of Proctorville, Ohio, passed away on Nov. 20, 2002. Our condolences go out to Glen's family.

STAYING IN TOUCH: As we previously advised, retiree Ray Knight is developing and maintaining a master listing of all "active and inactive" Corps retirees. Two very important needs that factor into making Ray's effort a success is the reporting of timely change of addresses and providing names of all known "nonparticipants."

Such info can be sent to Ray's e-mail address: rjknight1@earthlink.net or home address: #1 Greenridge Drive, Huntington, WV 25705. By the way, to those of you current Corps

employees who are planning retirement in the immediate future, Ray also needs your contact address in order for COEHDRA to "Stay in Touch."

RETIREES LUNCHEON This year's luncheon has been set for May 23. Mark your calendar-you will not want to miss this event. Other details (location, cost, etc.) will be announced later.

UPCOMING EVENTS COEHDRA will be meeting monthly from now through May. The meetings are held on the last Monday of the month, generally at 10:30 a.m. in the district office. We will be discussing, among other things, possible future activities. All retirees are welcome and encouraged to attend their associations meetings. If you cannot attend but would like to have input, contact Annette Quinn, Activities Coordinator at 304-525-7104.

LOCATING RETIREES We are continually trying to keep our retirees list up to date and you may be able to help. We only have information of retirees who receive Castle Comments. If you know of any retirees not receiving Castle Comments, let us know.



Photo by Randy Sortet

Over 40 retirees came out for the COEHDRA Christmas Luncheon Dec. 2.



You Said It



President George Bush announced Nov. 27 that he would support a 3.1 percent across-the-board pay raise for GS employees, but not the 1 percent locality adjustment that Congress supports. The reason, the costs of fighting the war on terrorism don't allow for the extra 1 percent and the 3.1 percent pay raise is already above the 2.1 percent inflation rate. Why would or wouldn't you support this decision?

Editor's Note: Fifteen people around the district were asked this question. Those that declined said they didn't feel strongly enough about the issue to answer.

Dwight Smith
Civil Engineer Programs and Project Management



If what President Bush says in his letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on November 27, 2002 is true that the "cost increases would threaten our efforts against terrorism or force deep cuts in discretionary spending or Federal employment to stay within budget" then I would support his decision to cut the locality pay raise. But what he has failed to realize or to mention is that the government has largely ignored the formula for locality pay set out in the 1990 Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act. "Under the formula, the government was supposed to close an estimated 30 percent gap between the private sector and federal pay to 5 p e r c e n t . "

Having said all that, we must keep all this in perspective with the economy the way it is today, there are a lot of people without jobs due to companies going bankrupt or having to cut back their work force to make ends meet so yes I am happy to get the 3.1 percent pay raise.

Denis Chabot
Environmental Engineer, Readiness Branch



If the United States were in trouble, I would be happy to and expect to sacrifice, not just one percent, but any above basic needs. Yet I distrust the president I assisted electing. What could possibly be the motives for unilaterally threatening aggression against Iraq, continually weakened over a decade by sanctions, and yet at a projected cost of \$2 trillion? Afghanistan, waged in a defensive mode for the 9/11 attacks, continues to be unresolved, with no end and no costs being discussed. The U.S. will have spent hundreds of billions of dollars for homeland security in the 24 months following the attack, when we don't even know who to mistrust in this country, so we must mistrust each and every last one of us.

We have always been great because we seek justice and we love peace; almost always the wars we have fought have been defensive. Senator John McCain has stated that defensive war presents fewer opportunities for corruption and more for justice. It would be easy for us to overrun Iraq, yet the right approach is rarely the easiest. To ask our God-fearing GS-3 taxpayers, who have a tough time establishing even a savings account, to finance war against a country which cannot threaten us but only threaten its nearest neighbors, is not just. I see Israel as having the means and interest to stabilize the Middle East, and deal with the murderous Hussein, in the course of time.

I say defend this great nation whatever the cost; but not one dime for aggression.

Jody Christian
Workforce Development Specialist Resource Management



The position of Presidency is one that requires great strength and wisdom. Strength to bear the burdens of our country...and wisdom to identify which things actually can be changed. Strength to accept the fact that it is impossible to please everyone...and wisdom to know a decision must be made anyway. Strength to accept daily criticism...and wisdom to understand a clear conscience is one's protection.

Our President, regardless of his political affiliation, has an extremely challenging job to do. I'm sure many of us would agree there is value in foresight when making high-impact decisions. In our daily lives, we are not forced to carry the burden of ensuring our country doesn't experience another day like September 11, 2001. Because of this, I will never stop being truly grateful for those who do carry this burden.

I have spent more years working in private industry than in the government, so this whole idea of getting annual cost of living increases AND scheduled step increases is awesome. In many companies, your "raise" (which doesn't always occur on an annual basis) tends to serve as the cost of living increase. I choose to remember a concept I learned in elementary school, that even a 1.0% increase is mathematically greater than 0.0%.

Safety squirrel parades through eastern Kentucky towns

By JESSICA EVANS
Park Ranger, Dewey Lake

This past fall, Safety Squirrel from Dewey Lake was seen throughout eastern Kentucky. He was on the move, visiting children and their parents with the intent of reminding them of the importance of safety.

Preschoolers at Mother Goose Day Care quivered with excitement as Safety Squirrel visited them that September 4, 2002. The children crawled all over Safety Squirrel, hugging and petting him as each child was sent home with their own polaroid with him. September was Safety Month at the Prestonsburg Walmart. On the 7th, Safety Squirrel and D.A.R.E. Bear from Floyd County Sheriff's Department greeted shoppers and handed out balloons. Later in September, Safety Squirrel visited 5 to 7-year-olds at the Lawrence County Elementary School for their first Junior Ranger Program.

October was just as busy for Safety Squirrel. On the fourth, he greeted shoppers at the Pikeville Walmart and was seen wandering around the store waving at people and hugging children. The huge tail was pulled only once or twice as he carefully maneuvered his way down the aisles of the store to avoid knocking items

from the shelves. He brought smiles from around every corner he turned. Later that month, Safety Squirrel attended the Jenny Wiley Parade in Prestonsburg. Again, he was seen waving at the crowds and delivering candy to the eager children. His final appearance in October was at the red, white and blue Parade in Martin, Ky. on the 19th. Although the day was cloudy, he brightened the afternoon by delivering candy and waving to the

children and adults gathered on the sidewalks. Everyone was delighted to see him join the festivities.

Throughout the fall months, Safety Squirrel has been busy spreading concern for safety around eastern Kentucky. His large eyes and contagious smile catch everyone's attention immediately. Safety Squirrel may hibernate for the winter, but he will be out again next spring.



Photo by Chris Helm Kemp

Safety Squirrel rides in a parade through downtown Martin, Ky. Behind the costume is Jessica Evans. Ranger Evans and Ranger Stonney Burke were responsible for making the guest appearances.

Oak Ridge— *Continued from page 1*

"We look within the division for the best resources. If one district can't handle the job, then we will go elsewhere in the Corps."

The team tried to bring in some assistance from the district nearest to the project, which is Nashville, but they had no one available with the necessary expertise. Next the team asked for support from the Buffalo District. Huntington and Buffalo had worked together before, including a project for the DOE tackling environmental problems near Lake Erie, so they joined the team.

The final team included 12

members representing four groups: the Huntington and Buffalo Districts, an A-E (Architectural Engineer) contractor and a NETL (National Energy Technology Laboratory) representative. It is a Virtual Team, which means they usually work in separate locations, but communicate via email, telephone or teleconferencing.

Lead Engineer Don Whitmore was delighted with the team's effort. "We only had four weeks of review time, and I was really pleased with the effort of our team members.— They did a very thorough job in the short time available."

He also credited the success to the other workers in his department. "They picked up our regular work load while

we tackled this job — we were all working long hours, but we couldn't have succeeded without a complete team effort."

The Huntington District team included Chief of Cost Engineering Mike Ferguson, Cost Engineers Fred Huff and Jeremy Stevenson, and Program Analysts Sharanna Romans and Jan Mayes.

The completed job has left behind some satisfied customers. Kessinger said, "The whole team had to work some long days to get the job done so quickly, but the DOE is very pleased with our work. In fact, we've just been contacted about another Oak Ridge job — this one with a budget of \$120,000."

Huntington District People

New employees



Cindy Otwell
Budget
Technician
Operations
and Readiness
Division



Chris Borton
Lead Appraiser
Appraisal
Branch
Real Estate
Division



Terry Patterson
Lock and Dam
Operator
Winfield Locks
and Dam



**Tunissha
Hubbard**
Secretary
Design Branch
Engineering
and
Construction



John Crabtree
Lock and Dam
Operator
Winfield Locks
and Dam



Sarah McGrew
Secretary
Marietta
Repair Station

Congratulations

• To Marissa Laney, daughter of Engineering and Construction Division's Sonya Laney, and the Buffalo A-Team cheerleaders for taking first place in their dance routing and second place in their technical cheer at the tri-state youth cheerleading competition at Marshall's Cam Henderson Center Oct. 13, 2002.

• To Contracting Division's Libby Ward and her husband retiree Ken Ward on the birth of their new granddaughter Megan Elizabeth Sept. 24, 2002. She weighed 7 pounds and 5 ounces. She was born to their son Tony and his wife Beth.

Condolences

• To retiree Elizabeth Lawrence on the loss of her husband Bob Dec. 17, 2002.

• To Paintsville Lake's Karen Cantrell and her family on the death of her sister-in-law, Yvonna Cantrell. She passed away Jan. 23.

Department of the Army
Huntington Dist. Corps of Engrs
502 Eighth Street
Huntington WV, 25701-2070

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